

WILLIAM WARD

THE JAPANESE ATTACK OF PEARL HARBOR

ON JULY 9 1940, AT BIRMINGHAM ALA I TOOK THE NAVAL OATH, AND ON DEC 9 1940, I TOOK A BERTH ABOARD THE UNITED STATES SHIP OKLAHOMA WHICH WAS ANCHORED IN THE HARBOR AT SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA. THE U.S.S. OKLAHOMA'S STATION FOR NAVAL OPERATIONS WAS IN THE VICINITY OF THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS. THE SHIP'S REFUELING AND RESUPPLY STATION WAS PEARL HARBOR. I WAS ABOARD THE U.S.S. OKLAHOMA ONE YEAR LACKING TWO DAYS, MAKING UNKNOWN NUMBERS OF ENTRANCES AND DEPARTURES FROM PEARL HARBOR

THE HARBOR IS WEST OF HONOLULU ABOUT FIVE MILES AND IS AN ISLENT WHICH EXTENDS INTO THE FLATLANDS A DISTANCE OF ABOUT FOUR MILES. THE HARBOR CAN NOT BE SEEN FROM THE SEA A BEND IN THE CHANNEL CUTS OFF THE VIEW. THE ENTRANCE IS WIDE AND DEEP, AND TWO LARGE SHIPS CAN MEET AND PASS WITH EASE. A SUFFICIENT DISTANCE INLAND THE ENTRANCE DIVIDES AND FORMS AN ISLAND IN THE HARBOR. THE ISLAND IS LARGE ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE THE NAVAL AIR STATIONS. THE HARBOR'S CHANNEL HAS TEES THAT EXTEND INTO DESIGNATED POINTS AND DOCKS. THE MAIN TEE (WHICH WILL BE REFERRED TO) EXTENDS FROM THE MAIN CHANNEL TOWARD HONOLULU

A BATTLESHIP, THE LARGEST TYPE OF SHIP, CAN CIRCLE THE ISLAND EITHER WAY AND GO TO SEA OR BACK TO BERTH, BUT IS ONLY PERMITTED TO MOVE IN ONE DIRECTION. THE BATTLESHIPS' BERTHS ARE ADJACENT TO THE ISLAND AND REACHABLE ONLY BY WATER. THE SHIPS ARE SECURED TO JETTIES AT BOW AND STERN. SOMETIMES THERE WOULD BE A SHIP TIED OUTSIDE OF A SHIP THAT WAS TIED TO THE JETTIES. THE OKLAHOMA'S BERTH WAS NUMBER TWO, AND WHEN THE MARYLAND WAS IN PORT, THE OKLAHOMA LAY OUTSIDE THE MARYLAND. HIS GAVE A VIEW UP THE MAIN TEE TOWARD HONOLULU. THE NEVADA'S BERTH WAS NUMBER ONE AND THE ARIZONA'S BERTH WAS NUMBER FOUR. THE OTHER BATTLE SHIPS HAD DESIGNATED BERTHS WHICH I CAN NOT RECALL. THE AIRCRAFT CARRIERS WERE ANCHORED WEST OF THE BATTLESHIPS.

THE SHIPS THAT LIE IN PORT ARE ANCHORED AT BOW AND STERN TO HOLD THEM IN FIXED POSITIONS, AND EACH TYPE IS DOCKED OR ANCHORED IN DESIGNATED SPACES. YOU CAN FACE EAST AND LOOK A LITTLE TO THE RIGHT OVER THE DRY DOCKS THAT ARE ON THE RIGHT OF THE MAIN TEE AND SEE THE AIRPLANES LANDING AND TAKING OFF FROM THE ARMY AIRFIELD

THE MARINE BASE IS ON THE SOUTHWESTERN END OF HTE ISLAND OF OAHU. THIS WOULD PLACE HE DIRECTION F ROM THE BATTLESHIPS' BERTHS A LITTLE SOUTH O F WEST. THE SUBMARINE BASE IS ON THE MAIN TEE FACING HONOLULU, AND DIRECTLY AHEAD IS THE LIBERTY LANDING.

IN A HALF-MOON CIRCLE, YOU CAN SEE THE MOUNTAINS RISE INTO THE BLUE SKY, AND KNOWING THERE ARE CANE AND PINEAPPLE FIELDS BETWEEN YU AND THE MOUNTAINS, ONE CAN FEEL SECURE AND CONTENT IN A PLEASANT SURROUNDINGS.

THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 1, 1941, THE OKLAHOMA PUT TO SEA ON MANEUVERS WITH OTHER SHIPS OF THE FLEET. THIS WEEK OF MANEUVERS TURNED OUT TO BE A WEEK OF CLEANING THE SHIP THOROUGHLY, INSTEAD OF ROUTINE PRACTICE OF BROADSIDE AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRING. EACH SHIP IS INSPECTED DAILY FOR CLEANLINESS AND SHIP SHARPNESS, BUT SEASONALLY, THERE IS A FLEET INSPECTION WHERE THE ADMIRAL COMES ABOARD WITH LARGE PARTIES OF OFFICERS TO INSPECT THE FLEET AS A WHOLE. WE, OF THE OKLAHOMA, THOUGHT (YOU ARE NOT TO THINK, YOU ARE TO DO) THAT WE WERE BEING TREATED BADLY, BUT ALL THE SHIPS WERE UNDERGOING THE SAME THING WE WERE.

THE CLEANING CONSISTED OF HOLY STONING THE DECK (THE DECKS BEING MADE OF WOOD IS RUBBED WITH A STONE AND SAND TO THOROUGHLY CLEAN) CAULKING ALL JOINTS AND PAINTING THEM, AND SCRAPING THEM, WIRE BRUSHING RUST SPOTS AND PAINTING THEM, AND SHINING BRASS WORKS. ALL DIVISIONS ARE OCCUPIED IN THEIR RESPECTED AREAS.

ENTERING PORT ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON, DECEMBER 5, 1941. THE OKLAHOMA DID SHINE. ALL PREPARATION HAD BEEN MADE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF FLEET INSPECTION. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6th, WAS USED TO COMPLETE THE JOBS THY COULD NOT BE PERFORMED AT SEA. WE WERE TIRED, BUT PROUD, TO BE MEMBERS OF A SHIP SUCH AS THE OKLAHOMA. MONDAY, WE WOULD PERFECT THE MINOR CLEANING JOBS BRIGHT AND EARLY.

THE GUNNERY DEPARTMENT HAD DONE AS GOOD A JOB AS WE. THE MAGAZINES WERE CLEAN. TH AMMUNITION AND HOIST AND GUNS WRE READY FOR INSPECTION. ALL SECTIONS WERE OPENED FOR THE INSPECTION THAT WAS TO START MONDAY. THE OFFICERS AND CREW OD THE UNITED STATES SHIP OKLAHOMA COULD SLEEP IN PEACE ON SATURDAY NIGHT AND SUNDAY NIGHT KNOWING THEY HAD DONE A GOOD JOB.

AWAY FROM THE FARM ONLY ONE AND ONE-HALF YEARS AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NAVY LIFE NOT BEING REACHED, THE THOUGHT OF HOME OCCURRED OFTEN. EVEN THE NEW FRIENDS COULD NOT EASE THE LONGING I FELT. THIS DECEMBER 6th, WITH THE COMING INSPECTION WHICH WAS MY FIRST FLEET INSPECTION, AND THE WISE WORDS OF MY FATHER COMING BACK TO ME WHEN I ASKED HIM TO SIGN MY NAVY PAPERS, "I'LL SIGN SON, BUT SIX YEARS IS A LONG TIME". SHOULD SHOW THAT I WAS FLUSTERATED SOME TWENTY THREE YEARS AGO.

THERE WOULD COME TO MY MIND MANYTHINGS, SUCH AS, THE TIMES WE WERE BETWEEN HONOLULU AND SAN FRANCISCO AND RAN INTO ROUGH WATER WHEN THE BOW WOULD GO DOWN BEING COVERED WITH WATER AND THEN COME OUT OF THE WATER TO A GREAT HEIGHT. THERE WAS THE THOUGHT THAT AN OLD TIMER SAID, "THE OKLAHOMA WOULD BE HARD TO SINK." THE BLISTER ON THE SIDE WAS TO CAUSE TORPEDOES TO EXPLODE AND NOT PENETRATE THE ARMOR PIERCING PLATE, AND THE DIVISIONS OF THE COMPARTMENTS WERE IN SUCH A WAY THAT EACH SPACE COULD BE REDUCED TO A SMALL SPACE.. SEEING ALL HATCHES AND DOOR WAYS THAT COULD MAKE A SHIP WATERTIGHT

WOULD MAKE ANYONE FEEL SAFE. WE HAD GONE THROUGH TRAINING IN ANTI-AIRCRAFT AND BROADSIDE FIRING TO BE ABLE TO PERFORM IN AN ORDERLY MANNER. (THE FORGOING MENTIONED TO BE REFERRED TO.)

ON BOARD THE UNITED STATES SHIP OKLAHOMA, DECEMBER 7, 1941, AT BERTH IN PEARL HARBOR HONOLULU, OAHU, TERRITORY OF HAWAII. REVEILLE HAD SOUNDED AT SIX O'CLOCK TO START ANOTHER SUNDAY, AND ITS SOUND WAS THE INDICATION OF A TYPICAL HAWAIIAN SUNDAY. AT SIX-THIRTY O'CLOCK, THE BUGLE SOUNDED FOR A CLEAN SWEEP DOWN, FORE AND AFT. SAILORS, HAVING COMPLETED THEIR MORNING PERSONAL TOILETRY, APPEARED ON DECK IN THEIR RESPECTED CLEANING STATIONS TO COMPLY. THESE "ORDERS OF THE DAY", BEING PASSED AS ROUTINE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE "OFFICER OF THE DAY" FROM THE QUARTER DECK, HAD THE RING THAT SNAPPED THE OFFICERS AND CREW TO THEIR RESPECTED DUTIES.

IT WAS CUSTOMARY ON SUNDAY THAT OFFICERS AND CREW MEMBERS WITH FAMILIES IN HONOLULU BE PERMITTED TO SPEND THE DAY WITH THEM. THE ONES THAT COULD DREAM UP A FRIEND COULD, WITH PERMISSION, VISIT THEM IN THEIR STATIONS. OTHERS THAT WERE ENTITLED TO LIBERTY WOULD BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE THE SHIP AT ONE O'CLOCK. THE BUGLE CALL FOR BREAKFAST SOUNDED AT SEVEN O'CLOCK, AND THE RUSH FOR COFFEE, HOT CAKES, BACON, CEREAL, AND FRUIT WAS THE FIRST SIGN OF REAL LIFE IN THE CREW.

THE DIVISIONS SEPARATED TO THEIR RESPECTED MESS PLACES AND ATE THEIR MEAL WITH ENVY IN THEIR FACES TOWARD THE ONES THAT WERE DRESSED AND READY TO MAKE THE FIRST LIBERTY BOAT THAT WOULD CARRY THEM ON THE FORGOING DESCRIBED TRIPS.

YOU COULD STEP OUT OF THE HATCH AND LOOK AROUND AND SEE MANY SHIPS ANCHORED AND TIED ALONGSIDE DOCKS AND, WITH CLOSE INSPECTION, SEE THE ONES IN DRY DOCK. THE DESTROYERS, SUBMARINES, REPAIR SHIPS, BATTLEWAGONS (BATTLE SHIPS), CRUISERS, BOTH LIGHT AND HEAVY, WERE AT THEIR DESIGNATED BERTHS. THE DAY WAS CALM AND CLEAN WITH STRONG SUN THAT INDICATED A TYPICAL HAWAIIAN DAY. A LAZY BREEZE WOULD CATCH SMOKE AND MOVE THE FLAGS ABOUT GENTLY. THERE WERE MOVEMENTS FROM SHIPS TO LANDINGS UPON ROUTINE MISSIONS, SOME PERTAINING TO MASS (THAT IS THE UP COMING PREPARATION FOR RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES FOR TEN O'CLOCK) SOME SMALL BOATS, AND VERY PROBABLY, MOVEMENT BRINGING IN SAILORS FROM THE STATES.

YOU COULD STUDY THE FACES OF THE SAILORS IN YOUR VICINITY AND SEE THE LONGING FOR HOME AND THE THOUGHT OF LOVED ONES. THE ROUTINE OF EVERYDAY ACTIVITY DISPLACED THESE LOOKS, BUT SUNDAY WITH HOLIDAY DUTIES LEFT THE MIND TO WONDER.

THE MEAL HAVING BEEN COMPLETED, I WANDERED DOWN TO THE SLEEPING COMPARTMENT, AND, IT BEING A DAY OF HOLIDAY DUTIES, I BEGAN TO WANDER OVER THE SHIP. ALL THE SAILORS WERE IN THE SAME MOOD AS I. I MIGHT HAVE TALKED TO SOME, ABOUT THERE WAS NO LIFE IN IT. EACH SECTION WAS SPIC AND SPAN, AND THE ONE IN CHARGE WOULD WATCH YOU LIKE A HAWK TO BE SURE YOU DID NOT MESS HIS AREA UP. IN MY WANDERING, I WAS IN A COMPARTMENT OF THE SHIP CANTINE, NOT THINKING, I WENT THAT WAY TO PAY DOLLAR THAT I OWED BUT FOUND THE CANTINE CLOSED. THE GUN THAT WAS MY BATTLE STATION WAS ON THE PORT SIDE. IN WANDERING AROUND, I REACHED THIS SECTION, STEPPED OUTSIDE TO BREATHE FRESH AIR AND, WHILE STANDING THERE, WATCHED THE ACTIVITY GOING ON IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE HARBOR. I SAW WHAT I THOUGHT TO BE SOME BOMB DROPPED IN THE VICINITY OF THE ARMY AIRSTATION. THIS WAS NOT PROPER AS IT WAS SUNDAY, BUT NO THOUGHT OF THIS CAME TO MY MIND.

TURNING AROUND TO GO BACK TO THE SLEEPING COMPARTMENT IN A SLOW, LAZY WALK, I HAD DESCENDED ABOUT ONE-HALF FLIGHT OF STAIRS, WHEN THE ONLY TIME DURING MY SIX YEARS IN THE NAVY, I HEARD PROFANITY OVER A NAVAL SHIP'S LOUDSPEAKER. THE BOATSWAIN MATE SOUNDED THE BATTLE CALL ON HIS PIPE, NOT BUGLE, AND SAID, "ALL HANDS MAN YOUR BATTLE STATIONS AND THIS IS NO S-T" THEN THE LONESOME BUGLE CALL TO GENERAL QUARTERS SOUNDED OVER THE SHIP.

AT ABOUT EIGHT O'CLOCK, THE CREW OF OFFICERS AND MEN WAS AWAKE ON A CLEAN SHIP THAT WAS OPENED FROM BOW TO STERN, ALL FIVE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-EIGHT FEET IN LENGTH, AND TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHT FEET IN WIDTH, THE SHORTEST AND WIDEST SHIP IN THE FLEET. IN A FEW SECONDS, I WAS AT MY BATTLE STATION. LOOKING OUT THE CASEMENT TOWARD HONOLULU, AND RIGHT DOWN ON THE WATER OF THE MAIN TEE, I SAW PLANES COMING IN, ONE BEHIND THE OTHER. THE PLANES LOOKED AS IF THEY WOULD FLY INTO THE SIDE OF THE SHIP. THEN, I SAW THE TORPEDOES AS THEY WERE RELEASED. THE PLANES SHOT UP AFTER THE LOAD WAS DROPPED, AND THERE, ON THE WINGS, WERE BIG RED RISING SUNS. IN THE WATER COMING AT THE SHIP WAS A WAKE AND MORE PLANES IN MY SIGHT. THEY TURNED TO MY LEFT AND RIGHT, ALTERNATING AS THEY CAME IN. WHEN THE FIRST TORPEDO HIT THE SHIP RIGHT BELOW ME, THE WATER CAME UP THE PASSAGE WAY OUTSIDE THE CASEMENT WHERE I WAS STANDING. THE GUN CREW MEMBERS HAD GATHERED, AND WE STOOD GASPING WHILE WE WATCHED PLANE AFTER PLANE COMING IN TO LAUNCH THEIR TORPEDOES DIRECTLY INTO THEIR TARGETS. WE STOOD THERE DUMBFOUNDED, NOT BEING ABLE TO PERFORM OUR DUTIES, WHILE TORPEDO AFTER TORPEDO EXPLODED INTO THE SIDE OF THE OKLAHOMA. THERE MUST HAVE BEEN FROM SEVEN TO TEN JARS, EACH SHAKING THE WHOLE SHIP. THE CONFUSION, TENSENESS, THE INABILITY TO STOP THE DESTRUCTION, AND THE HELPLESSNESS WE FELT MADE COLD SHIVERS RUN UP AND DOWN OUR SPINES. DURING THIS VERY SHORT INTERVAL, AND, WITH A LIMITED VIEW, THE DESTRUCTION COULD NOT BE GRASPED.

THE BOATSWAIN MATE PASSED THE WORD FOR ALL UN-ENGAGED PERSONNEL TO SEEK COVER BELOW DECK. THE MEMBERS OF THE GUN CREW DISBANDED TO SEEK OUR ASSIGNED COVERS ON THE SECOND DECK. THE TRAINING WE HAD UNDER GONE BEFORE STOOD IN OUR MIND, AND WE PROCEEDED TO COMPLY IN A FAIRLY ORDERLY MANNER. AFTER REACHING THE SECOND DECK ONLY MOMENTARILY, THE WORD WAS PASSED TO ABANDON SHIP. THIS PHASE IN THE TRAINING BEFORE HAD NOT BEEN UNDERTAKEN, THEREFORE, SOME CONFUSION OCCURRED, BUT NOT DETREMENTAL. EACH MEMBER WAS MOVING ALONG HURRIDLY SEEKING TOPSIDE. ALL MEMBERS WERE MOVING IN THE SAME DIRECTION.

THE TIME THAT HAD ELAPSED FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE JAPANESE ATTACK COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE THAN FIVE MINUTES. THE COMPARTMENT WAS FULL OF MEN AS I MOVED WITHIN VIEW OF THE HATCH AND FOUND IT CLOSED

EXCEPT FOR THE ESCAPE HATCH, BUT AN OPENING APPEARED, AND LEAPED UP TO GO UP THE SMALL OPENING WHICH WAS LETTING ONE MAN AT A TIME GO THOROUGH. DURING THE FEW MINUTES BEFORE, CREW MEMBERS IN DESIGNATED SPACES HAD PARTIALLY CLOSED WATER TIGHT HATCHES AND DOORWAYS, AND THIS WAS ONE THAT WAS CLOSED. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT MADE ME MOVE IN THE WAY I DID, BUT WHEN OUT I THREW OFF THE DOG (BOLTS THAT HOLD THE HATCH IN PLACE) AND, WITH THE HELP OF TWO MEN, WE THREW THE HATCH OPEN, PERMITTING TEN MEN TO ESCAPE AT A TIME WHERE ONLY ONE COULD ESCAPE BEFORE.

IN THE INTERVAL OF TIME REQUIRED TO REACH THE HATCH, I BELIEVE THE LAST TORPEDO PENETRATED THE OKLAHOMA. FIRST THIS TIME, THE HATCH FELL, AND MU CHIN HIT THE STEP. LATER I FOUND MY CHIN WAS CUT, AND THIS WAS THE ONLY TIME I WAS HURT DURING THE WHOLE WAR. BEFORE THIS, I HAD NOT NOTICED THE LIST TO PORT, BUT NOW, THE SHIP WAS LISTING TO PORT ABOUT THIRTY DEGREES. THE CREW IN THE VICINITY WAS PULLING ON THE GUN LOCATED AT THIS POINT. THEN, THEY WERE CLIMBING OVER THE CASEMENT, OVER THE PASSAGEWAY, AND OVER THE RAILING. AFTER THIS, ONE COULD WALK DOWN THE SIDE OF THE SHIP INTO THE WATER, THIS IS THE WAY I ABANDONED THE OKLAHOMA.

AFTER SWIMMING THE SHORT DISTANCE TO THE MARYLAND, I CLIMBED UPON ONE OF THE FENDERS THAT WAS HANGING BY THE SIDE (THE MARYLAND WAS INSIDE THE OKLAHOMA AS DESCRIBED FOREGOING, AND THE FENDER WAS USED TO KEEP THE SHIPS FROM RUBBING TOGETHER). I CLIMBED HAND OVER HAND UP THE SUSPENDING ROPES TO THE CORRESPONDING POSITION ABOARD THE MARYLAND, AS MY BATTLE STATION WAS ABOARD THE OKLAHOMA.

I REPORTED TO THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUN CREW AND GAVE HIM MY THE NAME OF THE POSITION OF THE GUN THAT I WAS TRAINED TO MAN. BECOMING CONSCIOUS OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING, I LOOKED BACK TOWARD THE OKLAHOMA, AND ALL I COULD SEE WAS THE SIDE AND NOT MUCH OF THIS, ABOVE THE WATER. THE CAPTAIN OF THE OKLAHOMA WAS STANDING ON THE SIDE DIRECTING ABANDON OPERATIONS. THE LAST SIGHT AND THOUGHT THAT WILL REMAIN IN MY MIND ALWAYS WAS THE SIGHTING OF CHIEF PETTY OFFICER WHOM I KNEW. HE HAD HIS HEAD STUCK OUT OF A PORT HOLE, AND I KNEW HE WAS TOO LARGE TO COME THROUGH THE SMALL OPENING. I KNEW THAT I WAS LUCKY, AND THAT MANY, MANY LIVES HAD BEEN LOST. THE TIME THAT IT TOOK THE OKLAHOMA TO SINK AND ALL THE INCIDENTS FOREGOING MENTIONED SINCE EIGHT O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING WAS ABOUT TEN MINUTES, THE OKLAHOMA HAD GONE DOWN WITHOUT FIRING A SHOT.

THE POSITION ABOARD THE MARYLAND WHERE I REPORTED WAS ABOUT THIRTY FEET FROM THE WATER. THE HEIGHT GAVE ME A VIEW OF ABOUT ONE-HALF THE HARBOR, AND NOT BEING OCCUPIED, I COULD OBSERVE THE ACTIVITY IN THIS SECTION.

THE SMOKE FROM BURNING SHIPS HAD THICKENED THE SKY. CREWMEN FROM THE MARYLAND, WHICH HAD BEEN PROTECTED FROM THE TORPEDO ATTACK BY BEING INSIDE THE OKLAHOMA, WERE NOW FIRING AT THE ENEMY AIRCRAFT. TIME HAS ELAPSED AS A DREAM, AND VAGUE PICTURES THAT CAN NOT BE FULLY DESCRIBED FLASHED ACROSS MY VISION.

AN ENEMY PLANE FLYING FROM SOUTH TO NORTH OVER THE DESTROYERS AND SUBMARINES THAT WERE BERTHED ON EACH SIDE OF THE MAIN TEE AND NO ANTI-AIRCRAFT BURSTS AROUND ENEMY PLANES, INDICATED THAT THE DESTROYERS AND SUBMARINES WERE NOT FIRING. THE PLANE WAS TRAILING SMOKE AND GRADUALLY DECLINING AS IT MOVED TOWARD THE MOUNTAINS. THIS COULD HAVE MEANT THAT THE ARMY AT THE ARMY AIRSTATION WAS FIRING.

THE NOISE OF BOMBS BLENDED WITH THE FIRING OF GUNS AND THE MARYLAND TREMBLED AS SHE TOOK A BOMB DOWN THE FORWARD HOLE. THIS WAS THE ONLY DAMAGE SHE RECEIVED DURING THE JAPANESE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR.

THE DAMAGE REPAIR CREWMEN OF THE ARIZONA WERE STANDING BESIDE LINES TO CAST OFF AND GET UNDERWAY ON NOTICE. THE FUTILE EFFORTS OF THE CREWMEN TO ACTIVATE THIS WERE OF NO AVAIL. THE OIL FLOWED FROM THE TANKS OF DAMAGED SHIPS AND SCATTERED OVER THE SURFACE OF THE WATER, HINDERING MEN WHO WERE TRYING TO SWIM TO THE BEACH OR SHIPS. THE ARIZONA WAS BADLY DAMAGED, AND FIRE BROKE OUT INSIDE THE SHIP, SCATTERING TO ALL PARTS OF THE SHIP, AND UPON REACHING THE POWDER ROOM, A TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION FOLLOWED. THIS EXPLOSION WAS A CHAIN REACTION OF REPEATED EXPLOSIONS OF DIFFERENT MAGAZINES, TOTALLY DESTROYING THE ARIZONA AND MAJOR PORTION OF ITS CREW MEMBERS. THESE EXPLOSIONS SET FIRE TO THE OIL IN THE WATER IN ALL AREAS AROUND THE ARIZONA.

THE FIRE SPREAD AND BURNED THE MEN WHO WERE TRYING TO SWIM AWAY FROM THE SHIPS. FIRE THREATENED THE SHIPS THAT COULD STILL REPEL THE ENEMY ATTACK, AND THE EMERGENCY CREWMEN HAD TO FIGHT THE FIRE WITH POWERFUL WATER HOSES. THIS WOULD DRIVE THE FIRE BACK, ONLY TO HAVE IT COME AGAIN AS THE OIL WOULD THICKEN ON THE WATER AND STILL BURN AND FLOW BACK AGAIN TOWARD THE SHIPS.

THE NEVADA, UNDERTAKING TO PUT TO SE, WAS ROCKED BY AN EXPLOSION. THERE WAS NO ENEMY PLANE IN SIGHT AT THIS TIME, SO THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE WERE ENEMY SUBMARINES INSIDE THE HARBOR THAT WERE TRYING TO BOTTLE UP THE CHANNELS WAS NOT A MORALE BUILDER. THE CAPTAIN OF THE NEVADA RAN THE SHIP AROUND TO KEEP IT FROM SINKING IN THE CHANNEL.

WE COULD NOT SEE ANY OF OUR AIRPLANES TAKING OFF FROM THE ARMY AIRSTATION, AND THE HEAVY SMOKE RISING FROM THERE INDICATED THE HEAVY DAMAGE WHICH HAD BEEN DONE THERE BY THE JAPANESE ATTACK. LOOKING TOWARD THE DRY DOCKS AND SEEING BELLING SMOKE SHOWED THERE HAD BEEN HEAVY.

AFTER ONE-HALF HOUR THE ATTACK SEEMED TO BE OVER, AND THERE APPEARED TO BE NO ENEMY PLANES IN THE VICINITY, BUT THE SMOKE HUNG LOW, AND ONLY A LITTLE OF THE BLUE SKY COULD BE SEEN. NO ARMY, NAVY OR MARINE FIGHTER PLANES THAT WERE SUPPOSED TO INTERCEPT ENEMY AIRCRAFT COULD BE SEEN. THE ONLY FRIENDLY AIRCRAFT THAT I SAW TOO FAR FROM THE NAVAL AIR STATION AND WAS A LONG DISTANCE PATROL PLANE.

GROUPS OF TWOS, THREES, AND FOURS OF UNENGAGED PERSONNEL STOOD AND TALKED AND DISCUSSED THE

DESTRUCTION THEY HAD OBSERVED. WE WOULD LOOK AT SCENES THAT BEFORE HAD ONLY BEEN VISIONS AND COULD NOW SEE THE DAMAGE, AND WE HAD LINGERING THOUGHTS OF THE MEN STRIVING TO SAVE THEIR LIVES. THE DRILLS OF NAVAL TRAINING NOW BECAME A REALITY IN OVERCOMING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ATTACK. IT WAS ACHIEVED IN A MANNER THAT A CAPTAIN, COMMANDER, OR DRILL OFFICER WHO HAD DRILLED INTO THE MEN, THE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS, WOULD BE PROUD TO SEE THE ORDER THAT WAS BROUGHT OUT OF THE CONFUSION CAUSED BY THE JAPANESE ATTACK.

THE INTERVAL OF TIME PERMITTING THE ENEMY PLANES TO RETURN TO THEIR CARRIERS TO REFUEL AND RELOAD WITH BOMBS HAD OCCURRED, THE ENEMY ATTACKS AT INTERVALS RESUMED. IN THE MEANTIME, THE ARMY, NAVY AND MARINES HAD LAUNCHED THE UNDAMAGED INTERCEPTOR FIGHTERS TO SCOUT AND INTERCEPT ENEMY PLANES. THE ENEMY PLANES THAT COULD GET BY DEFENSE WOULD DROP BOMBS THEN STRAFE ANY OBJECT IN THEIR PATH, AND SUICIDE DIVE THEIR PLANES INTO ANY OBJECT TO FURTHER DESTROY THEM.

ABOUT NINE O'CLOCK, THE ORDER WAS PASSED OVER THE LOUDSPEAKER FOR THE CREW OF THE OKLAHOMA TO MUSTER ON THE DECK. SMALL BOATS WERE MADE AVAILABLE FOR TRANSPORTATION TO CARRY US TO THE DOCK.

THE MUSTERING OF OUR CREW MEMBERS BY DIVISIONS WAS DISHEARTENING, AS WE FOUND MANY OF OUR FRIENDS AND SHIPMATES MISSING. WE LEFT THE MARINA DISCOURAGED, HEARTBROKEN, AND EMPTY HANDED TO MUSTER ON THE DOCK. THE HOME WE HAD KNOWN WAS NO MORE.

AFTER REACHING THE ISLAND, WE WERE TOLD TO REPORT TO THE ARMORY TO RECEIVE SMALL ARMS. THE GROUP THAT I WAS ASSIGNED TO NUMBERED ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE, AND THEY WERE FROM ALL DIVISIONS OF THE OKLAHOMA. WE DID NOT HAVE ANY IDENTIFICATION, AND THE CLOTHES ON OUR BACKS HAD BEEN PARTIALLY GIVEN TO US. THE PETTY OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE ARMORY ISSUED TO THE GROUP TWELVE FORTY-FIVES, TWO CLIPS OF AMMUNITION FOR EACH GUN, ONE BROWNING AUTOMATIC RIFLE, AND FEW POUNDS OF AMMUNITION FOR IT. THE ARMORY WAS LEFT EMPTY.

I SAW THE DESTRUCTION THE NAVAL BASE HAD RECEIVED AS WE MOVED FROM THE DOCKS TO THE ARMORY. THE HANGARS, RUNWAYS, WAREHOUSES, AND OTHER INSTALLATIONS WERE DEMOLISHED. ALL ENEMY PLANES HAD COME IS SO LOW THAT A SAILOR WITH A BROWNING AUTOMATIC RIFLE HAD SHOT IT DOWN. THERE WERE NO CARRIERS IN PORT, SO NO CARRIERS WERE LOST. THE U.S. WAS OVER ON ITS SIDE. IT WAS A BATTLESHIP THAT HAD BEEN CONVERTED TO AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER, AND IT WAS BERTHED IN AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER'S BERTH. THEREFORE THE JAPANESE REPORTED IT AS BEING A CARRIER SUNK.

THERE WAS NOW A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF FRIENDLY PLANES OVERHEAD, AND THEY WERE FROM THE CARRIERS IN THE VICINITY SENT IN TO INTERCEPT ENEMY PLANES.

ONE SECTION OF THE DOCK WHERE WE HAD MUSTERED WAS COVERED WITH THE DEAD AND DYING MEN THAT HAD BEEN BURNED BEYOND RECOGNITION. THE CHARRED BODIES, WITH FLESH FALLING OFF WHERE THEY HAD HAD BEEN HANDLED, WERE LYING QUIETLY. THEY MUST HAVE BEEN GIVEN SEDATIVES TO EASE THE PAIN AS SOME WERE STILL LIVING, FOR YOU COULD SEE THEM BREATHING.

THE MEDICAL CORE WAS OCCUPIED AND SHORT-HANDED, BUT ONLY TIME WOULD OVERCOME THIS HEAVY LOAD. THERE WERE THE WOUNDED AND BLEEDING MEN WHO NEEDED ATTENTION, AS WELL AS THE BURNED ONES.

REPAIRMEN OF THE BRANCHES OF OPERATION WERE CLEARING, REPAIRING, AND PATCHING THE DAMAGED AREA AS WE MUSTERED AT THE FERRY FOR TRANSPORTATION TO THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE HARBOR. WE COULD LOOK IN THE DIRECTION OF ANY OF THE MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AND SEE THE SMOKE RISING FROM ALL OF THEM INDICATING THE GREAT DESTRUCTION WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE IN SO SHORT A TIME.

THE TIME THAT HAD ELAPSED SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE MAJOR ATTACK HAD BEEN ABOUT THREE HOURS. BY THIS TIME, THE SCATTERED ATTACKS WERE OVER. WE BOARDED A TRUCK ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE HARBOR FOR OUR TRIP TO THE NEWLY ASSIGNED AREA AT THE AMMUNITION DEPOT WHICH WAS LOCATED ON THE SOUTHWESTERN END OF THE ISLAND.

THE RUMORS HAD BECOME INNUMERABLE, AND THEY EXCITED US TO THE POINT OF REALIZATION THAT AN ENEMY LANDING WAS POSSIBLE. WE MADE TRIP TO OUR NEW DUTIES WITH EXPECTATION IN OUR MIND, BECAUSE WE HAD HEARD RUMORS THAT ENEMY PILOTS WERE SHOT DOWN IN THE SUGAR CANE FIELDS THAT BORDERED THE ROAD, AND THAT SABOTEURS WERE HELPING THEM. WE LOOKED FOR ATTACK ANY TIME. THE RUMORS ALL PROVED FALSE.

OUR STAY AT THE DEPOT CONSISTED OF LOADING WAR TIME AMMUNITION THAT WENT TO EVERY SHIP THAT ENTERED PEARL HARBOR, AND WE WALKED PATROL ALONG BEACHES IN SHIFTS. THESE EFFORTS PROVED WE WERE NOT LICKED AND THAT WE COULD COME BACK.

THIS IS A SUMMARY OF THE FOREGOING. THE OKLAHOMA ON HER SIDE IN THE HARBOR, THE NEVADA AGROUND OUTSIDE THE CHANNEL, THE ARIZONA TOTALLY LOST, TWO DESTROYERS IN A BADLY DAMAGED STATE IN DRY-DOCK, THE HANGARS INSTALLATIONS, WAREHOUSES, AND RUNWAYS DAMAGED BUT NOT BEYOND REPAIR, DENOTED THE MASSIVE DAMAGE. YOU COULD NOT INCLUDE THE UTAH IN THIS AS IT UNDERWENT BOMB PRACTICE EVERY ROUTINE DAY. BY FAR THE GREATEST LOSS OF ALL WAS THE LIVES OF THE MEN. THE HARBOR AND ALL THE SHIPS IN THE HARBOR, EXCEPT THE ONES NAMED ABOVE WERE STILL USABLE. EVERYONE HAD LEARNED A LESSON THAT WOULD PRESENT EXPERIENCE IN COMING BATTLES.

IT IS TRUE THAT THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION ON THE ISLAND OF OAHU HAD UNDERGONE A HUMILIATING EXPERIENCE. WHO CAN BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENTIRE PACIFIC FLEET SITTING IN PEARL HARBOR LIKE A BUNCH OF DUCKS WAITING AN UN-SPORTSMANLIKE HUNTER? WHO CAN SAY WHO WAS TO BLAME? IT WAS NOT THE OFFICERS ABOARD THE OKLAHOMA, NOR THOSE ON THE ARIZONA. THE CAPTAIN OF THE NEVADA HAD ATTEMPTED TO GET HIS SHIP UNDERWAY. A FLEET INSPECTION HAD ALWAYS BEEN HELD AT INTERVALS, AND WHO CAN SAY THAT THE ADMIRAL WAS WRONG? WASHINGTON SHOULD NOT HAVE TO BEAR THE SNEERS AND RIDICULE THAT ACCOMPANY THE BLAME PLACED UPON THEM. THE JAPANESE DIPLOMATS WERE NEGOTIATING WITH OUR DIPLOMATS AT THAT TIME. THE CREWMEN FROM ANY OF THE BASES CERTAINLY CAN NOT BE BLAMED. HOW CAN ANYONE BE BLAMED?

ARE WE TOO LENIENT ON LAWS GOVERNING THE ENTRIES OF **ALIENS** INTO OUR COUNTRY? **WE KNOW** THERE WERE SABOTEURS WHO HELPED THE JAPANESE BECAUSE OF THE PRECISION WITH WHICH THEY **POINTED** THEIR OBJECTS. THE JAPANESE KNEW THE LOCATION OF THE INSTALLATIONS IN OUR **MILITARY** BASES. THE **KNEW** ALSO, THE EXACT TIME THE FLEET INSPECTION WAS TO TAKE PLACE.

I FOUND OUT MY FATHER WAS RIGHT. IT ONLY TOOK THREE HOURS TO MAKE AN ETERNITY. THE OLD TIME WHO SAID THE OKLAHOMA WOULD BE HARD TO SINK WAS WRONG BECAUSE THE OKLAHOMA **WENT DOWN** IN TEN MINUTES. THE BLISTERS THAT WERE SUPPOSED TO STOP THE TORPEDOES DID NOT STOP THEM. ONE **OTHER** THOUGHT THAT STILL REMAINS IN MY MIND IS THE DOLLAR I WENT TO THE CANTEEN TO PAY, AND FOUND THE **CANTEEN** CLOSED. THAT IS ONE DOLLAR I NEVER GOT A CHANCE TO PAY.

THE DASTARDLY ACT OF AGGRESSION, THAT THE JAPANESE PERFIDIOUSLY PLANNED AND **CARRIED OUT**, INTERRUPTED THE COMPLACENT ROUTINE OF MANY LIVES. BOTH SERVICE PERSONNEL AND CIVILIAN ALIKE. **THIS ACT** SHOULD INSTITUTE THE LEADERS OF OUR GREAT NATION TO MAINTAIN A STATE OF READINESS AT ALL **TIMES** IN THE FUTURE.

THE FOREGOING INFORMATION, MY PERSONAL OBSERVATION OF THE JAPANESE ATTACK ON **PEARL HARBOR**, IS ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.